

REMARKS

The Office Action dated June 10, 2004, has been received and carefully noted. The amendments made herein and the following remarks are submitted as a full and complete response thereto.

As a preliminary matter, Applicant respectfully requests that Examiner consider the Information Disclosure Statement filed on March 19, 2004, and provide an initialed copy of the PTO-1449 for our records.

Claims 9 and 11 have been amended. Applicant submits that the amendments made herein are fully supported in the specification and the drawings as originally filed, and therefore no new matter has been added. Accordingly, claims 9-13 are pending in the present application and are respectfully submitted for consideration.

Allowed Claim

Applicant appreciates the allowance of claim 10 in the present application.

Formal Matters

Claim 9 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. The claim has been amended to more clearly recite the subject matter of the present invention. In particular, the phrases of "a first step for inactivating multiple word lines in the first memory cell block," and "a second step for inactivating multiple word lines in the second memory cell block" have been amended to recite -- a first step for *placing* multiple word lines in the first memory cell block *in a non-selected state*, -- and - a second step for *placing* multiple word lines in the second memory cell block *in a non-selected state* --. It is submitted that the amended claimed steps more clearly show a

relationship to the method of conducting the word line selection test, and therefore overcomes the rejection. Hence, Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the rejection.

Claims 9 and 11-13 Recite Patentable Subject Matter

Claims 11-13 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Applicant's Admitted Prior Art ("AAPA"). Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection.

Claim 11 recites a semiconductor memory device comprising, among other features, a plurality of sense amp drive circuits connected to the plurality of block control circuits and the plurality of sense amp groups, wherein each of the sense amp drive circuits selectively activates an associated one of the sense amp groups based on the sense amp control signal of the associated one of the block control circuits, each of the sense amp drive circuits including a latch circuit that is reset by the word line reset signal and a sense amp reset timing signal. Applicant respectfully submits that AAPA fails to disclose or suggest at least this feature.

The Office Action characterizes AAPA as allegedly disclosing "a semiconductor memory device comprising: a plurality of memory cell blocks (fig. 1, blocks BL0-3), wherein each of the memory cell blocks includes a plurality of memory cells and a plurality of word lines connected to the memory cells (fig. 2);

a plurality of sense amp groups ... (fig. 1, sense amp groups 1's);

a plurality of block control circuits ... (fig. 1, block control circuits 4's);

a plurality of sense amp drive circuits (fig. 1 sense amp drive circuits 3's), each of the sense amp drive circuits including a latch circuit (fig. 3, 12a/12b)."

Applicant respectfully submit that the rejection fails to comply with 35 U.S.C. § 132(a), as well as 37 C.F.R. § 1.104(c)(2) because the rejection is incomplete, and therefore the rejection is improper.

Title 35, section 132(a) of the United States Code states:

(a) Whenever, on examination, any claim for a patent is rejected, or any objection or requirement made, the Director shall notify the applicant thereof, stating the reasons for such rejection, or objection or requirement, together with such information and references as may be useful in judging of the propriety of continuing the prosecution of his application; and if after receiving such notice, the applicant persists in his claim for a patent, with or without amendment, the application shall be reexamined. No amendment shall introduce new matter into the disclosure of the invention. (Emphasis added.)

In addition, 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.104(b) and (c)(2) prescribe the following:

(b) *Completeness of examiner's action.* The examiner's action will be complete as to all matters, except that in appropriate circumstances, such as misjoinder of invention, fundamental defects in the application, and the like, the action of the examiner may be limited to such matters before further action is made. However, matters of form need not be raised by the examiner until a claim is found allowable. (Emphasis added.)

(c) *Rejection of claims.*

(2) In rejecting claims for want of novelty or for obviousness, the examiner must cite the best references at his or her command. When a reference is complex or shows or describes inventions other than that claimed by the applicant, the particular part relied on must be designated as nearly as practicable. The pertinence of each reference, if not apparent, must be clearly explained and each rejected claim specified. (Emphasis added.)

It is respectfully submitted that the rejection of claims 11-13 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by AAPA is wholly incomplete because it does not clearly explain how AAPA show each and every element recited in claim 11. Specifically, it is submitted that the Office Action failed to address the feature of “a plurality of row decoders connected to the plurality of memory cell blocks, wherein each of the row decoders selects one of the word lines in an associated one of the memory cell blocks” as recited in claim 11. Accordingly, the rejection fails to clearly explain how each and every element allegedly is disclosed by AAPA. Therefore, Applicant submits that the rejection is incomplete, and fails to comply with US patent practice. As such, Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the outstanding Office Action, and a new non-final Office Action be issued should the Examiner determines that the application is not in condition for allowance.

Notwithstanding the incomplete rejection of claims 11-13, Applicant submits that AAPA does not teach or suggest at least the feature of “a plurality of sense amp drive circuits connected to the plurality of block control circuits and the plurality of sense amp groups, wherein each of the sense amp drive circuits selectively activates an associated one of the sense amp groups based on the sense amp control signal of the associated one of the block control circuits, each of the sense amp drive circuits including a latch circuit that is reset by the word line reset signal and a sense amp reset timing signal.”

Put simply, AAPA does not teach or suggest that the latch circuit (14g, 14h) is reset by the word line reset signal (WLrs) which is generated by a block control circuit (21), and is reset by a sense amp reset timing signal (SArst) (see Fig. 9.). Accordingly,

Applicants submit that the present invention as recited in claims 11-13 distinguishes over AAPA.

To qualify as prior art under 35 U.S.C. §102, a single prior art reference must teach, i.e., identically describe, each feature of a rejected claim. As explained above, AAPA fails to disclose or suggest each and every feature of claim 11. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that claim 11 is not anticipated by nor rendered obvious by the disclosure of AAPA. Therefore, Applicant respectfully submits that claim 11 should be deemed allowable.

As claims 12-13 depend from claim 11, Applicant submits that each of these claims incorporates the patentable aspects therein, and therefore is also allowable for at least the reasons set forth above with respect to the independent claim, as well as for the additional subject matter recited therein.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection.

Conclusion

In view of the above, Applicants respectfully submit that each of claims 9-13 recites subject matter that is neither disclosed nor suggested in the cited prior art. Applicants also submit that the subject matter is more than sufficient to render the claims non-obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art, and therefore respectfully request that claims 9 and 11-13 be found allowable and that this application be passed to issue.

If for any reason, the Examiner determines that the application is not now in condition for allowance, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner contact the

Applicants' undersigned attorney at the indicated telephone number to arrange for an interview to expedite the disposition of this application.

In the event this paper has not been timely filed, the Applicant respectfully petitions for an appropriate extension of time. Any fees for such an extension, together with any additional fees that may be due with respect to this paper, may be charged to counsel's Deposit Account No. 01-2300, referencing Attorney Docket No. 108075-00124.

Respectfully submitted,



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